



OIDAC Europe

March 2026

Monthly Analysis





Anti-Christian Hate Crimes in Europe
OIDAC Europe, March 2026

1. Summary

During the month of March 2026, the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe (OIDAC Europe) recorded **41 anti-Christian hate crimes** targeting Christian places of worship, religious symbols, religious spaces, and Christian individuals.

The recorded hate crimes comprise **21 cases of vandalism, 9 cases of desecration, 7 arson-related attacks, 2 thefts** specifically targeting religious objects, and **2 cases of physical violence**. Particularly serious incidents included the **intrusion and assault during a religious service** at Notre-Dame Immaculée Church in Belgium, and several acts of desecration and symbolic targeting of central Christian elements, including the **burning of altar Bibles** inside a church in Germany and a church in Switzerland, where the incident also led to the brief hospitalisation of the pastor due to smoke inhalation. Cases involving satanic or overtly hostile anti-Christian graffiti were also recorded, including in **Viterbo, Italy**, and **Poznań, Poland**, while in other cases crosses, altars, statues, confessionals, and grave sites were deliberately damaged or desecrated.

The highest number of incidents in March 2026 was recorded in **Italy (10)**, followed by **Germany (9)**, **France (6)**, and **Poland (4)**. Further cases were recorded in **Spain (2)**, **Belgium (2)**, **Ireland (2)**, **Austria (1)**, **Croatia (1)**, and the **Czech Republic (1)**. Outside the European Union, additional incidents were recorded in **Switzerland (1)**, the **United Kingdom (1)** and **Ukraine (1)**.

In addition to the incidents outlined above, a considerable number of **thefts and break-ins affecting churches** were recorded across several countries in March. These included **11 cases involving the theft of religious objects**, such as chalices, monstrances, relics, and crosses, as well as **35 other thefts**, often targeting donation boxes, copper materials, and church infrastructure, and **8 break-ins or attempted break-ins**. The highest numbers were recorded in Germany and Italy, with further clusters in France, Poland, and Austria. While these cases do not necessarily indicate an anti-Christian bias and are therefore not included in the total number of hate crimes, they nonetheless represent an **ongoing security concern for churches and religious communities** due to their systematic pattern.

In addition, **6 cases of church fires with unknown causes** and **one case of suspected arson with unclear bias** were recorded during the reporting period.

2. Trends: Rise in Vandalism and Desecration, Targeting of Sacred Objects

The incidents recorded in March 2026 reached a **higher overall number** compared to previous months. A notable development in March 2026 was the **high number of vandalism cases**, which accounted for more than half of all recorded incidents. With **21 cases of vandalism**, this category clearly exceeded arson-related attacks, which declined compared to February. Many of these cases were not limited to ordinary property damage but involved the deliberate targeting of visibly Christian spaces and symbols, including churches, chapels, religious statues, confessionals, crucifixes, holy

water fonts, and grave markers. In several cases, the attacks were accompanied by elements indicating explicit hostility toward Christianity, such as **satanic graffiti, inverted crosses, anti-religious slogans**, or attacks timed to coincide with significant **Christian feast days**.

A second striking pattern was the **high number of incidents involving desecration or sacrilegious conduct**. Of the 41 recorded cases, **9 were classified as desecration**, and several additional vandalism cases also contained desecratory elements. These incidents included the **theft of consecrated hosts in Italy,** the **scattering of consecrated hosts on the floor in Germany**, the **desecration of graves and cemeteries in France and Poland**, the **targeting of altars and sacred objects in Belgium**, and the **destruction of confessionals and a crucifix in Italy**.

In regard to church thefts a worrying pattern can be observed. While these cases have not been included as anti-Christian hate crimes, they increasingly constitute a security concern for local churches as many incidents showed a **repetitive or systematic pattern**, including serial thefts or organised targeting of the same churches.

3. Hate Crimes by countries

Italy

A total of **10 anti-Christian hate crimes** were recorded in Italy in March 2026, including **7 cases of vandalism[1], 2 desecration cases[2], and 1 theft[3] targeting a religious object**. A particularly serious case occurred in Tuscania, a fresco of the Madonna and part of the church exterior was damaged by gunfire. In San Pietro a Vico, confessionals were destroyed and a crucifix broken. In Viterbo, a church façade was defaced with satanic graffiti, including inverted crosses and “666”. Other recorded cases included the theft of consecrated hosts in Rasa, the destruction of a holy water font in Valmaura, damage to rose windows in Provaglio d’Iseo, vandalism of a chapel in Nozarego on its feast day, and vandalism affecting a parish church and Catholic school in Rosarno. In Frosinone, repeated incidents targeting churches included a woman approaching the altar, turning a statue upside down, striking a cross, and removing the altar cloth. In Ancona, a theft from a church was accompanied by reported blasphemies.

In addition, a fire was set beneath the altar of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes in Lissone[4], partially damaging the altar and Palm Sunday olive branches. However, according to reports, the suspected perpetrator had mental health issues; the case was therefore not included in the statistical count of anti-Christian hate crimes.

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[1] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11192
https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11216
https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11167
https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11162
https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11132
https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11083
https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11079

[2] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11095
https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11088

[3] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11207

[4] https://www.ilcittadinomb.it/news/cronaca/lissone-piromane-da-fuoco-ai-ramoscelli-dulivo-in-chiesa-panico-alla-madonna-di-lourdes/

Germany

A total of **9 anti-Christian hate crimes** were recorded in Germany in March 2026, including **4 cases of vandalism[5], 2 arson-related attacks[6], 2 cases of desecration[7], and 1 theft targeting a religious object[8]**. In Hildesheim, a series of incidents affecting churches included a fire in a parish garden and the discovery of urine in a baptismal font. In Garbenteich, fire damaged the altar Bible and altar area of a Protestant church. In Veert, perpetrators desecrated the tabernacle and left consecrated hosts scattered across the floor. In Pleidelsheim, a large cross was removed from a church façade and discarded in a garbage bin. Other incidents included the beheading of a statue of Mary in Klein-Winternheim, the theft of an altar cross in Neuburg an der Donau, obscene graffiti on St. Agatha Church in Alverskirchen, and the deliberate damage of a medieval holy water stela in Altenberg Cathedral.

France

A total of **6 anti-Christian hate crimes** were recorded in France in March 2026, including **4 cases of vandalism[9] and 2 cases of desecration[10]**. In Paris, an altar inside Saint-Roch Church was vandalised, causing significant damage to a nineteenth-century religious structure. In Belfort, multiple churches were targeted with vandalism and break-ins; in one case, consecrated hosts were found on the ground and sacred objects stolen. Other recorded incidents included insulting anti-religious graffiti on the Church of Sainte Valérie in Felletin and a severe cemetery vandalism near Aix en Provence.

Poland

A total of **4 anti-Christian hate crimes** were recorded in Poland in March 2026, including **1 case of vandalism**[11], **2 cases of desecration**[12], and **1 attempted arson attack[13]**. In Trzebinia, an attempted arson targeted the Church of Saints Peter and Paul, where kneelers in the vestibule were set on fire and an attempt was made to ignite the main entrance door. In Białystok, a Catholic church was repeatedly targeted with acts

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[5] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11209
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[6] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11214
https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11177
[7] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11123
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[8] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11094
[9] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11250
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[10] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11263
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[11] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11153
[12] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11138
https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11117
[13] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11128

of vandalism and religious offence. In Niestępów, around 200 graves were vandalised and crosses taken from a parish cemetery. In Szczecin, a stone cross was destroyed at a memorial site.

Spain

Two cases of **vandalism**[14] were recorded in Spain. In Bilbao, a church was defaced with graffiti by an antifa-affiliated group, which also posted a video of the act online. In Barcelona, a Catholic school linked to the Regnum Christi movement was vandalised with hostile political graffiti, prompting calls for increased security.

Belgium

Two anti-Christian hate crimes[15] were recorded in Belgium, including **one case involving physical violence** and **one case of desecration**. At Notre-Dame Immaculée Church in Anderlecht, an intruder disrupted a religious service, threw a cross onto the altar, and assaulted a parishioner. In Lommel, a church was deliberately desecrated with sexually explicit messages and attacks on the altar and other sacred objects; the incident formed part of a series of repeated attacks on the same church in recent months.

Additional significant cases

In County Westmeath, **Ireland**[16], two arson-related attacks were recorded over the same weekend, in incidents authorities considered linked. Both attacks damaged the main entrances to the churches. In Absam Parish Church, **Austria**[17], one arson-related attack was recorded, as two minors entered the church, set a fire, and desecrated the interior in what was described as a serious act of vandalism and arson. In Labin, **Croatia**[18], a statue of the Virgin Mary and other church property were vandalised outside a church on the eve of Palm Sunday. In Le Sentier, **Switzerland**[19], a Bible was deliberately set on fire on the altar of a Protestant church, causing damage and leading to the brief hospitalisation of the pastor for smoke inhalation. In Prague, **Czech Republic**[20], the Church of St. Wenceslas was defaced with hateful graffiti equating the cross and the Star of David with a swastika.

Outside the European Union, one further anti-Christian incident was recorded in the United Kingdom[21] and one in Ukraine[22]. In Laindon, United Kingdom, Salvation Chapel

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[14] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11105
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[15] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11210
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[16] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11090
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[20] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11092
[21] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11191
[22] https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=12&case=11160

International reported repeated and escalating vandalism, including a fire, destruction of church property, and graffiti. In Ukraine, a group of about fifteen people allegedly attempted to abduct a seminary student near Pochaiv Lavra by force.

4. Conclusion

The incidents recorded in March 2026 show that anti-Christian hostility in Europe continued to affect Christian places of worship. The total number recorded this month exceeded the number of cases recorded in previous months and continued to show a wide variety of forms, but with a stronger emphasis on **vandalism, desecration, and direct interference with sacred spaces** than in the previous month.

Compared to February, the number of arson-related attacks declined, while acts involving **symbolic anti-Christian targeting**, sacrilegious conduct, and deliberate attacks on central religious elements became more prominent. This included the desecration of altars, tabernacles, consecrated hosts, grave sites, crosses, confessionals, and religious statues, as well as hostile or satanic graffiti directed explicitly at churches and Christian institutions.

The March data also point to the **cumulative impact of repeated attacks** and intrusions on Christian worship and community life. In several cases, churches were targeted more than once. One case also involved the disruption of a religious service accompanied by assault. While the figures presented reflect only the incidents documented by OIDAC Europe and therefore cannot capture the full extent of anti-Christian hostility, the patterns identified nonetheless point to persistent security challenges affecting Christian places of worship and highlight the continued need for effective preventive and protective measures.